



Be smart about your medications

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No doubt about it, modern medicine has made our lives better in many ways. It can ease a pain, lower blood pressure, or counteract disease but if not taken properly, medicine can't do its job correctly and can even cause dangerous complications for us.

To make sure you get the most out of your medicine, there are a few guidelines you should follow.

First, when you are prescribed a new medicine, find out the right way to take it. Ask questions. Write down the answers.

Do not skip doses of medication or take half doses. Take your medicine until it's finished or until your doctor says it's okay to stop.

Take your medicine in the exact amount and at the time your doctor prescribes. If you need to, use something to help you remember like weekly pill boxes, charts, calendars. Some people use meals or bedtime as reminders to take their medicine. Find a system that works for you.

Don't take medicine in the dark. To avoid making a mistake, turn your light on before reaching for your pills. Check the expiration dates on your medicine bottles and throw away outdated medicines.

Finally, make a list of all the medicines you take. Show it to all your health care providers. Keep one copy in your medicine cabinet and one in your wallet or purse. The list should include the name of each medicine, the doctor who prescribed it, the reason it was prescribed, the amount you take, and when you take it.

Remember, medicines that are strong enough to cure you can also be strong enough to hurt you if you don't use them correctly.

Want to be a HealthierUS Veteran?



HealthierUS Veterans is a joint effort by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Health and Human Services to educate veterans and their families about ways to combat obesity and diabetes.

Veterans are more likely than the general population to have diabetes, one of the major complications associated with being overweight. According to the American Diabetes Association, 7 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes, and the rate increases with age. Among veterans receiving VA health care, who are on average older than the general population, the rate is 20 percent.

As part of this initiative, if you are an overweight patient receiving VA health care, you may participate in weight loss programs tailored to your needs. You may also receive pedometers, diet advisories and "prescriptions" suggesting how much to walk or, in the case of wheelchair users, how much to roll.

If you would like to know more about this program ask your doctor or log on to www.healthierusveterans.va.gov.

Stay cool during the summer heat



- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting and light colored clothing. Wear a hat or use an umbrella to help block out the sun.
- Wear sunscreen when outdoors. Avoid being outdoors during the peak sun hours 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Wear sunglasses.
- Drink water even when you don't feel thirsty.
- Eat small meals and eat more often! Avoid hot and heavy foods. Try to limit high protein foods. They can increase metabolic (internal body) heat. Eat cool foods such as salads.
- If you can, avoid strenuous activity. Not possible? Then do it during the coolest part of the day, usually 4 a.m. – 7 a.m.
- Take regular breaks when it is hot.
- When possible, stay indoors and spend more time in air conditioned places.
- Block out the sunlight with shades or blinds to keep indoor temperatures cooler. Use your oven only if absolutely necessary.
- If you take medications, ask your pharmacist if you need to be extra careful during the warm weather.

Don't be a No Show

Help us provide health care to more veterans each day. Call your health care provider 24 hours in advance if you're unable to keep a scheduled appointment.

For more news or information about the medical centers and clinics within the South Central VA Health Care Network, visit www.visn16.med.va.gov.

MyHealtheVet gets a facelift, adds more tools

Look for changes coming to My HealtheVet, the Web site that serves as the gateway to veteran health benefits and services.



The site, www.myhealth.va.gov, provides access to trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits and resources, the Personal Health Journal, and online VA prescription refills.

Updates to the site include changes in its appearance as well as changes that will make it even easier to use. Two new journals for recording family and past medical histories will also be added.

New Handbook Available

A new edition of the popular handbook *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* by the Department of Veterans Affairs is now available.

The 2006 edition can be downloaded free from VA's Web site at www.va.gov/opa/feature.

Web site helps you find government benefits

From veterans' benefits and social security to job training and loans, find out whether you qualify for these benefits and more at www.GovBenefits.gov.